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POLICY ISSUES: COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS

International conventions and protocols in the field of the environment

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to Governing Council decision 24 (III) of 30 April 1975 which requests the Executive Director to inform the Council at each session on the status of new and existing conventions in the field of the environment, and to General Assembly resolution 3436 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 which requested the Governing Council to keep the General Assembly informed of any new conventions in that field and of the status of existing conventions. The information contained in the report is provided by Governments and international organizations acting as depositaries to the respective conventions, in response to the Acting Deputy Executive Director's letter of 19 December 1994. It reflects the status of conventions and protocols as at 30 November 1994 and takes into account information received by the UNEP secretariat up to 7 March 1995. Information on the objectives, provisions, signatories and parties of international environment-related agreements may be found in the 1993 edition of the UNEP Register of International Treaties and Other Agreements in the Field of the Environment.

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Council may wish to take note of the present report and authorize the Executive Director to transmit it, together with any comments made by delegations on the report, to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3436 (XXX) of 9 December 1975. The Council may also wish to call on States that have not yet signed, ratified or acceded to conventions and protocols in the field of the environment to do so.

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A. Depositaries

1. The following Governments and intergovernmental organizations reported on the status of conventions for which they serve as depositaries:

Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Kuwait, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom, Western Samoa, the United Nations Secretariat, the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Organization of African Unity, the Council of Europe, the Association of South East Asian Nations, the Permanent Commission for the South East Pacific, the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.

B. Conventions and protocols that have entered into force

2. The secretariat has been informed that the following international conventions and protocols in the field of the environment have entered into force during the period covered by the present report (1 July 1992 - 30 November 1994):

(a) Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, adopted at the second meeting of the Parties at London on 29 June 1990, entered into force on 10 August 1992;

(b) The Protocol for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-based Sources, adopted at Kuwait on 21 February 1990, entered into force on 2 January 1993;

(c) The Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean, adopted at Moscow on 11 February 1992, entered into force on 16 February 1993;

(d) The Convention Concerning Safety in the Use of Chemicals at Work, adopted at Geneva on 25 June 1990, entered into force on 4 November 1993;

(e) The Convention on Biological Diversity, opened for signature at Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992, entered into force on 29 December 1993;

(f) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, adopted at New York on 9 May 1992, entered into force on 3 March 1994;

(g) The Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, adopted at Canberra on 10 May 1993, entered into force on 20 May 1994;

(h) The Copenhagen Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, adopted at Copenhagen on 25 November 1992, entered into force on 14 June 1994;

(i) The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, adopted at Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 10 December 1982, entered into force on 16 November 1994;

(j) The Protocol to the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, adopted at London on 19 November 1976, entered into force on 22 November 1994.

3. The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation, adopted at London on 30 November 1990, enters into force on 13 May 1995.

C. New adopted conventions and protocols

4. The secretariat has been informed that, in addition to those instruments listed in the report to the Council at its seventeenth session (UNEP/GC.17/10), the following conventions and protocols were also adopted during the period covered by that report (1 September 1990 - 30 June 1992):

(a) The Convention Concerning the Protection of Alps, adopted at Salzburg, Austria on 7 November 1991;

(b) The Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe, adopted at London on 4 December 1991;

(c) The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised), adopted at Valletta, Malta, on 16 January 1992;

(d) Protocol of Amendment to the European Convention for the Protection of Animals Kept for Farming Purposes, adopted at Strasbourg, France, on 6 February 1992;

(e) The Treaty on European Union, adopted at Maastricht, Netherlands, on 7 February 1992. The Treaty contains provisions by which environmental protection is recognized as one of the major issues the Community is required to address;

(f) The Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks, adopted at Moscow on 11 February 1992;

(g) The Convention Concerning the Conservation of the Biodiversity and the Protection of Priority Forestry Areas of Central America, adopted at Managua, Nicaragua, on 5 June 1992.

5. The secretariat has been informed that the following international conventions and protocols in the field of the environment were concluded during the period covered by the present report (1 July 1992 - 30 November 1994):

(a) The Agreement establishing the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at Madrid on 24 July 1992;

(b) The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment for the North-East Atlantic, adopted at Paris on 22 September 1992;

(c) Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, adopted at the fourth meeting of the Parties at Copenhagen on 25 November 1992;

(d) Protocol to Amend the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, adopted at London on 27 November 1992;

(e) Protocol to Amend the International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, adopted at London on 27 November 1992;

(f) The North American Free Trade Agreement, adopted on 17 December 1992. The Agreement contains provisions on, inter alia, relation to environmental agreements, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures and technical barriers to trade, including standards-related measures;

(g) The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction, adopted at Paris on 13 January 1993. The Convention sets out provisions obligating the Parties to assign the highest priority to ensuring the safety of people and the environment;

(h) The Agreement for the Establishment of the Near East Plant Protection Organization, adopted at Rabat, Morocco, on 18 February 1993;

(i) Protocol to the International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, adopted at Torremolinos, Spain, on 2 April 1993;

(j) The Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, adopted at Canberra on 10 May 1993;

(k) The Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, adopted at Apia, Western Samoa, on 16 June 1993;

(l) The Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment, adopted at Lugano, Switzerland, on 21 June 1993;

(m) The Convention on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents, adopted at Geneva on 22 June 1993;

(n) The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, adopted on 13 September 1993;

(o) The Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas, approved by the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at Rome on 24 November 1993;

(p) The Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, approved by the one-hundred-and-fifth session of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at Rome on 25 November 1993;

(q) The Convention on Nuclear Safety, adopted at Vienna on 17 June 1994;

(r) The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, adopted at Paris on 17 June 1994;

(s) The Convention for the Establishment of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization, adopted at Kisumu, Kenya, on 30 June 1994;

(t) The Agreement Relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, adopted at New York on 28 July 1994. The Agreement, inter alia, strengthens the provisions relating to the protection of the marine environment from deep sea-bed activities;

(u) The Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, adopted at Lusaka on 8 September 1994.

D. Changes in the status of existing conventions and protocols

6. The status of ratification of, or accession to existing conventions and protocols may be found in a table entitled "Status of Ratification of, and Accession to Conventions and Protocols in the Field of the Environment" which is made available to the Council as background information.